



Open Doors: Youth Engagement Group

Facilitators: Francis Wooby and Megan Cosham, Aprill Cole (on-call alternate)

Youth Team Staff: Ken Inbar (Team leader), Megan Cosham, Francis Wooby, Sheryl Fisher, Hayley Maynard, Kara Mitchell, Katie Sakki, Aprill Cole, Erin McMurtry

What is the Youth Engagement Group all about?

- For youth ages 14-21 (some exceptions) who reside or go to school in Lanark County
- A group of youth who want to make a positive change and are passionate about mental health and social issues
- A safe, inclusive space for youth to be able to get involved in the community with support from adult allies (Open Doors facilitators)
- Engaging in group discussions and planning events/initiatives
- Promote positive mental and physical wellness within their own lives and in their community
- Provide opportunities for youth to build life skills and take on leadership roles (Youth Facilitator position, lead/plan discussions and activities for P2P group)

Peer 2 Peer Group

- Another youth group that we offer at Open Doors is called the Peer 2 Peer Group
- For youth ages 13-17 (with some exceptions) who reside or attend school in Lanark County
- A safe, inclusive space for youth to hang out with each other and socialize
- Raise awareness of mental health and reduce the stigma
- Engaging in group discussions, fun activities and a safe space to be yourself!
- Provide opportunities for youth to build social/life skills and take on leadership roles (Youth Facilitator position, lead/plan discussions and activities for group)

Achievements

- Projects Completed:
 - Community Clothing Swap in June 2017
 - Planned and facilitated PowerUP 3.0 Youth Summit: Mind Matters event with Rebecca Shams on December 1st 2018
 - Helped with planning and hosting the Open Doors Youth Awards event on May 9th 2019
 - Presented to Board of Directors
 - Sparked current quality improvement initiative for children and youth mental health services in Lanark County
- Events/Initiatives Attended:
 - Visited the Neutral Zone in Ann Arbor, Michigan on March 18th-20th 2019
 - Attended the Disable the Label conferences hosted by The New Mentality in Orillia, Ontario (in person in 2018/2019 and virtually due to COVID-19 in 2020/2021)
 - Presented to Board of Directors
 - Participated in Centre of Excellence Youth Engagement Standards focus group in Brockville led by Children's Mental Health of Leeds and Grenville

- The New Mentality is a provincial network of youth engagement groups advocating for continuous growth and improvement of children and youth mental health services in Ontario
- Works to encourage, train, and support youth advocates and leaders
- Provide funding to member groups, such as our Youth Engagement group, to hire a Youth Facilitator to help plan and run meetings and activities
- Runs annual Disable the Label conference for youth

The
New
Mentality
DISABLE THE LABEL

The Inclusion Zone



- Brand of Open Doors Targeted Prevention work for youth
- Social connection, acceptance, equity, a sense of competence and accomplishment - all contribute positively to mental health
- Through the Inclusion Zone, Open Doors is providing the space and resources to cultivate connections, learning opportunities, and personal growth
- In addition to peer2peer and YEG, initiatives such as a 2SLGBTQ+ youth group and cooking program in development, with more ideas taking shape all the time

Group Details

- Youth Engagement Group:
 - When: Every second Monday from 4:30-6:30pm
 - Where: "The Link" in Smiths Falls (88 Cornelia Street West, other side of the building from Open Doors office)
 - Snacks (YUM!) are provided and transportation for the youth can be arranged if needed
- Peer 2 Peer Group:
 - When: Every second Tuesday from 4:30-6:30pm
 - Where: "The Link" in Smiths Falls (88 Cornelia Street West, other side of the building from Open Doors office)
 - Snacks (YUM!) are provided and transportation for the youth can be arranged if needed

Both groups may defer to running virtually through Microsoft Teams in the case of inclement weather or when face to face is not permitted/feasible.

How to Refer Clients?

- Determine which group the client would be best fit for (could be one of the groups or both) and if they fit the qualifications of the group
- Contact Francis Wooby or Megan Cosham to put forth the client's name, age, address and contact information
- We will then reach out to the client to ultimately determine if they would be a good fit, to discuss the details of the groups with them and complete any consents/documentation necessary
 - Francis Wooby: fwooby@opendoors.on.ca
 - Megan Cosham: mcosham@opendoors.on.ca
 - Open Doors Admin: admin@opendoors.on.ca